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CIA Official Is Doubtful Of Victory in Viet Nam

By the Associated Press

A Central Intelligence Agency officer has voiced "serious doubt that victory can be won" in South Viet Nam and has suggested the eventual outcome might be a negotiated settlement. Administration sources said yesterday this is not the United States Government view.

The conclusion that no military end to the war against Red guerrillas is in sight was expressed by Willard Matthias, a member of the CIA's Board of National Estimates, in a June 8 paper on "Trends in the World Situation."

Mr. Matthias wrote that the Communist Viet Cong have stepped up their offensive and the counter-guerrilla effort "continues to flounder" under poor prosecution by the Saigon government.

Sees Long Stalemate

Continued large-scale United States support of the anti-guerrilla campaign and an end to "further political deterioration within South Viet Nam" could at least achieve "a prolonged stalemate," the CIA officer said.

Mr. Matthias said there also is a chance that future developments "could lead to some kind of negotiated settlement based upon neutralization." French President Charles de Gaulle has suggested neutralization of the area, an idea coolly received by the United States Government.

Administration sources made the 50-page document available after learning it would be published in the Chicago Tribune.

A cover sheet to Mr. Matthias' paper, signed by Sherman Kent, chairman of the National Estimates Board, stated that the document was circulated "for information." The paper "has general board approval, though no attempt has been made to reach general agreement on every point of it," Mr. Kent said.

Viet Cong Active

Mr. Matthias wrote that "the guerrilla war in South Viet Nam is in its fifth year and no end appears in sight."

"The Viet Cong in the south, dependent largely upon their own resources and control of the Communist regime in the north, are pressing their offensive more vigorously than ever," he said.

"The political mistakes of the Diem regime inhibited the effective prosecution of the war, which is really more of a political contest than a military operation, and led to the regime's destruction."

"The counter-guerrilla effort continues to flounder, partly because of the inherent difficulty of the problem and partly because Diem's successors have not yet demonstrated the leadership and the inspiration necessary."

Situation Is Fragile

"There remains serious doubt that victory can be won, and the situation remains very fragile. If large-scale United States support continues and if further political deterioration within South Viet Nam is prevented, at least a prolonged stalemate can be attained."

"There also is a chance that political evolution within the country and developments upon the world scene could lead to some kind of negotiated settlement based upon neutralization."

Administration sources emphasized these views.

Mr. Matthias was expressing his own views, not those of the United States Government or of any agency within the United States Government. Members of the National Intelligence Estimates Board, a 12-man CIA committee, and others have written numerous papers which are valuable for circulating ideas but do not represent policy.

Mr. Matthias' memo was circulated among a few lower-ranking officials but was never given to the policy-setting National Security Council. It was submitted for publication to a magazine, which turned it down.

The anti-guerrilla campaign in South Viet Nam may be long and arduous, but the United States Government is fully committed to stemming the insurgents there, and believe this will be done.

The United States Government sees no grounds for negotiation with the Reds over South Viet Nam at this time. A negotiated settlement already has been reached at the Geneva conferences on Indo-China and it is up to the Communists to quit violating the Geneva accords by their guerrilla aggression.